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and **Soil Water Conservation**

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Soil
Conservation
Service

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**FOOD SECURITY
ACT APPLICATION**

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Cover: Corn is planted using no-till along the edge of a contour grassed back-slope terrace system. (Photo by Tim McCabe.)

Comments from the SCS Chief:

What We Have To Celebrate

We're all celebrating a birthday this month on July 4 . . . our country is 213 years old. That's how long ago our ancestors began an experiment in self-government that is still a model and a hope for oppressed people everywhere.

The main reason this experiment has succeeded is because it advanced what was then a radical idea: that a government should derive its powers from the consent of the governed. We still feel that way.

In 1790, when the first U.S. census was taken, there were 3.9 million Americans. Nine out of ten of them were farmers. Today, our population approaches 230 million. And yet, only 1 out of 50 of us are farmers.

The efficiency has been accomplished by advances in science, machinery, transportation, and education. But there is one element that no labor-saving device will ever replace: the American farmer. Because he — or increasingly these days, she — is the one who makes the decisions about what to plant, how much to plant, and where to plant. But those are the kinds of decisions American farmers are making every day.

They must be making good ones. How else could we be the world's leading exporter of wheat and corn and the number two exporter of rice? Our government respects the American farmer and his or her accomplishments. We in SCS need to provide guidance when asked, support when needed, and then get out of the way.

As we enjoy our Independence Day celebration this month, we can think what it means to be independent and self-governing, and realize how much we have to celebrate.



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The KANSAS STORY

A Study in Food Security Act Application

WHEN THE 1985 Food Security Act (FSA) was signed, the challenge it presented the U.S. Department of Agriculture was immense. Now, more than 3 years later, the State of Kansas serves as an example of how States are coping with FSA activities. Kansas is one of the frontrunners both in numbers of acres needing conservation plans and plans completed.

How did Kansas do it? What secrets can it share? What can be learned from Kansas as the rest of the country moves into the implementation stage of the Food Security Act of 1985?

By mid-April 1989, employees of the USDA's Soil Conservation Service in Kansas had finished developing 83 percent of the needed conservation plans for more than 13 million acres of highly erodible land (HEL). They expect to be completely finished with conservation plans by July 1989. Most field office staffs have started the application phase of FSA compliance.

Through seven signups for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), 24,400 contracts had been signed involving 2.385 million acres. During the recent eighth signup, 2,341 bids on 199,000 acres



Alfred Aufdemberge (left), discusses newly contoured terraces with SCS district conservationist Dan Meyerhoff. Aufdemberge is one of three brothers who still farm the land on which their father started conservation practices in the 1950's. The brothers have available farm equipment to maintain their own terraces, waterways, and diversions. (Photo by Kathleen Diehl.)

were offered, which will probably put Kansas above the 2.5-million-acre mark for CRP, with the most contracts of any State.

Wetlands determinations are being made and should be finished by early 1990. This inventory could involve up to 600,000 acres across the State.

There are many reasons Kansas has succeeded. Perhaps one is because it's a State full of concerned people who have an intimate relationship with their land.

"Conservation isn't a difficult job in Kansas," said Gene Dester, SCS district conservationist in Dickinson County. "Most farmers want to stay in compliance."

Jon Deege, SCS district conservationist for Rice County, agreed. "Farmers usually know when they have a problem and what they need to do," he said. "Our job is documenting needs and suggesting different alternatives to take care of them."

Another reason Kansas has managed so well is because of the cooperative spirit displayed among agencies and groups. "Without the help and support of the State Conservation Commission and the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts," said James Habiger, State conservationist, "we could have easily fallen short of our mark."

There are at least three key components to the Kansas story and the effort to handle the workload for FSA compliance: an information/education campaign, the ability of SCS employees to grasp a crisis situation and see it through as a successful ongoing process, and a good working relationship between SCS in Kansas and contractors.

The following series of articles covers FSA application in Kansas. They were written by **Kathleen Diehl**, contributing editor, *Soil and Water Conservation News*, SCS, Washington, D.C.

This process was designed to help districts choose objectives with reasonable bounds . . . to concentrate on ideas and solutions.

Information Campaign Sets Stage

NINETY PERCENT of the landowners in Kansas participate in USDA programs. The State SCS public affairs section developed an Information and Education Campaign in 1987 to ensure that every landowner who wanted to maintain his or her eligibility for USDA programs had the opportunity. This campaign, directed to 105 individual conservation districts, and with guidance from the State Conservation Commission (SCC), was accomplished in two phases. The first phase was designed to inform landowners with highly erodible land (HEL) of their options under FSA and of their need to develop conservation plans to comply. Phase II, currently in progress, is an information effort for the implementation of the finished plans plus educational programs in residue management.

Funding for a local information campaign was provided by SCS after a conservation district signed a cooperative agreement with SCS,

designed the campaign, and calculated the budget. A district campaign might have included meetings (both general and special — such as women's group meetings), newsletters, newspaper ads, poster displays, fair booths, monthly conservation pages and/or conservation editions in local newspapers, interviews, and public service announcements on local radio stations. It also might have covered information surveys to measure the effect of these activities on the public.

In Phase I, the SCC and 82 of the 105 conservation districts completed information plans and received a total of \$330,000 to fund their campaigns. The SCC and 87 conservation districts have initiated information plans for Phase II, costing \$281,000. Phase II information plans are targeted for completion in the fall of 1989.

The initial step each district made in designing the individual plans was completed through a series of Strategic Information Planning worksheets. This process was designed to help districts choose objectives with reasonable bounds, communicate the proper message to precise constituencies, project a result, and measure the effectiveness of the desired goals. Using the worksheets helped the districts to focus their information resources where they did the most good in their areas and to concentrate on ideas and solutions.

In Phase II, the objectives include relaying information necessary to properly implement and maintain the conservation practices specified in individual conservation plans. Phase II also includes an educational component targeted to lenders, agribusiness leaders, and farm organizations to ensure that they have sound information to aid their clients who are involved in FSA compliance. Most Phase II plans include field days to show methods of maintaining conservation practices, guided and self-guided tours that demonstrate practices such as crop residue management, and conservation management techniques.

"We've had wonderful success with our newsletter," Gene Dester, SCS district conservationist in Dickinson County, said. "Before the campaign, people had dribbled in if they read our letters or if we phoned them. One morning I arrived and people were waiting outside the door. They came in droves all that day. I couldn't figure out what had happened. Come to find out later, the first newsletter from the district had been mailed." The Dickinson County newsletter is attractive and easy to read and announces all upcoming meetings, workshops, and field days.

Barber likes to feel that he and his staff are on the cutting edge of conservation work now that the initial crisis is over.

Group Meetings Solved Crisis

WHEN DISTRICT conservationist Barry Barber accepted his job in Kiowa County, Kans., nobody told him he would be initiated under crisis conditions. Barber arrived from SCS in Texas in September 1987 and was immediately faced with 73 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts.

"I had this deskful of contracts to write — all without acreage measurements — due within 30 days," he said. "Then there was all that highly erodible land (HEL) determination stuff and subsequent conservation planning on a new computer system. I wondered what I had gotten myself into here."

Kiowa County has 150,000 acres of HEL — half the county cropland, representing 450 farm units. It also has two distinct types of land: sandy and hard.

Barber started out scheduling landowners for hourly appointments. He was determined to take it slow and steady — the work would eventually get done. But he hadn't counted on the phone ringing constantly all day, nor the stream of traffic through the office for reasons other than CRP contracts or conservation plans. People came in with questions, they brought in already finished plans to talk about other

Barry Barber (foreground), district conservationist in Kiowa County, Kans., inspects demonstration residue plot with soil conservationist Kevin Pritchard. Barber and his staff maintain the plots as part of a self-guided tour to view conservation practices. (Photo by Tim Christian.)



options, and some just came in to check out the new district conservationist. Barber said it quickly became overwhelming and exhausting.

"I'd begin fresh in the mornings and the appointments would last about an hour," he said. "By the end of the day, a landowner would ask me a question and I'd think to myself, Now, didn't I just answer that question? Then I realized I'd answered it for a landowner that had been in that morning, or yesterday. Everything was merging together. It got ridiculous! I knew I couldn't continue like that."

Because they were repeating basically the same information and answering the same questions, Barber and his staff decided to hold group meetings. But first, they sectioned off the county using townships as guidelines.

"We wanted to keep neighbors together," Barber said. "They talk to each other and like each other, and among landowners, this is the best form of communications."

Barber presented each landowner with a packet of information specifically about his or her land. It contained soil maps of the land and suggested practices and alternatives.

"We realized in these first meetings that this was the way to do it," Barber said. "We gave them lots of information, flashed up visuals, and tackled the questions where everyone could hear and respond to the answers."



Wheat sprouting up through residue on demonstration plot set up by Barber and his staff. (Photo by Kathleen Diehl).

Barber began each meeting by addressing the anticipated 1990 Farm Bill because he knew it was a vague, nagging concern to most landowners. "Then I'd turn the meeting around by saying something like 'But today, in 1987, all we need to concentrate on is complying with the 1985 Farm Bill and all we specifically need to do in this meeting is talk about a plan for your highly erodible cropland,'" Barber said. "It was effective. It took the larger situation and broke it down to its first simple step — the planning. I'd stress we were there as advisors, to help them plan the best possible practices, considering their land, their equipment, and their finances."

Barber's meetings were so effective, the Kiowa staff finished all their plans in early 1989 — except for four or five.

Barber plans to use the same group meeting format for the implementation phase of FSA. As the plans have been entered into CAMPS, they've been tagged for certain practices and potential needs. Letters can easily be generated in a timely manner to each landowner needing either information or assistance, and a group meeting can be scheduled to handle problems or organize field days.

Barber and his staff have arranged tours and field days on farms where conservation practices have been completed. "We set up some self-guided tours so a landowner can just go out for a Sunday drive and check out conservation practices that are of interest to him or her."

Barber likes to feel that he and his staff are on the cutting edge of conservation work now that the initial crisis is over. "I feel we have the ability and impetus now to do conservation work like never before," he said. "The landowners also have the incentives now and the ability to gain knowledge to manage their farms with the best possible benefit to themselves, their stock, and their land. We've never had a farm bill that offered so much to so many with such lasting benefits."

It became obvious that women also have a vital interest in agriculture and farm affairs . . .

Information Campaign Involves Women

SOIL CONSERVATION Service employees are well aware from landowner records that a lot of farm owners are women. But when they hold informational meetings, few women show up. One of the suggestions on the Strategic Information Planning Worksheets sent out by the SCS Kansas State Office was that a "specialized" meeting be targeted to women.

The Smith County Conservation District scheduled a meeting for women because 27 percent of the conservation plans written to date in Smith County involved land owned by women. Additionally, they discovered, 39 farms have a woman listed as the primary decision maker and 145 farms have a woman listed as having control of the farm in some way.

Having a meeting for women seemed like the natural thing to do under these circumstances. Although SCS programs and services are offered to all on a nondiscriminatory basis, some people believe farm meetings are just for men.

The Smith County District planned the meeting for 35-40 women. Two meetings and 146 women later, the conservation district was patching the holes in the "farm meetings are just for men" theory. It became obvious that women also

have a vital interest in agriculture and farm affairs, and they wanted to know the conservation provisions of the 1985 Food Security Act and how these provisions pertained to their own land.

"I was overwhelmed by the response to these meetings," Steve Wingerson, district conservationist in Smith County, said. "We informed the women that they are an important part of our public."

"Many of the women cooperators in the county are unaware of the activities and programs of the conservation district, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, and SCS," Kenny Ratliff, conservation district chairman, said. During the meetings, both SCS and ASCS employees explained their office operations and where to go to get information. "I got a lot of good comments from the women after the meeting," Ratliff said.

Lori Bredow, public affairs specialist intern, SCS, Salina, Kans.

Conservation Contractors Pitch In

THE IMPLEMENTATION stage of the Food Security Act of 1985 affects most conservation contractors in the country. In many States, contractors have been able to check out their work — with 5 percent spot checks made by SCS technicians — since the early 1970's. Checkout involves verifying and documenting that the completed work complies with plans and specifications developed for that site. Kansas, for example, holds workshops for conservation contractors to train non-SCS personnel how to perform checkout of 80 percent of such practices as terraces, waterways, diversions, excavated ponds, and land leveling.

Most contractors in Kansas like to do their own checkouts. Fuzz Haile, a contractor in Rice County, said it speeded up his entire operation when he was trained to do his own checkout.

"I've been doing my own since 1974," he said. "After training, contractors can check as they work, and when they're finished, they do their final check, fill out the forms,

and move on to the next job. They don't have to wait for a busy technician or take the chance of having to move all their equipment back to a site after they've moved on. It's been a tremendous improvement in operations for everyone."

A memorandum of understanding was signed October 28, 1988, between SCS and the Land Improvement Contractors of America (LICA). It calls for cooperative training efforts in surveying, design, layout, and checkout of conservation practices. LICA, a major trade association with some 4,000 members nationwide, promotes effective soil and water conservation, efficient business principles, and free enterprise in the field of soil and water conservation. To achieve these objectives, members promote themselves as contractors who use the most efficient earthmoving and construction equipment available; use well-trained and experienced equipment operators; and work in close cooperation with landowners and the agencies involved in conservation and environmental work.

Paul "Corky" Malm, national president of LICA, who lives in Lindsborg, Kans., has seen many changes in conservation work over the past 25 years. The biggest has been contractor checkout for SCS projects. But another change that he feels has made a difference in FSA implementation is the closer relationship between the Kansas Chapter of LICA and SCS.

Joe Gestner, the current president of the Kansas Chapter of LICA,

from Scott City, agrees. "When Jim Wallace, the SCS State conservation engineer, came, things began to get better. He is a professional at getting people together," he said.

The Kansas Chapter of LICA holds its annual meeting in January, a month before the national annual meeting. "Wallace always makes it a point to get there on Sunday evening while people are registering, in time for the icebreaker," Gestner said. "He doesn't have to be there until the sessions begin Monday morning. But he's always there, meeting people, shaking hands. It's a terrific boost to all the contractors. Wallace makes the contractors feel they're doing something important, something worthy. This is part of the ongoing relationship between LICA and SCS."

"It doesn't pay not to get along," Malm concluded. "Contractors used to bitterly complain when a technician would appear, whether it was one from SCS or from, say, the State Highway Department. I'd tell them 'Hey, we're all in this together, we're all working toward pretty much the same thing,' and try to get them to work together, to talk to each other more. Wallace's efforts were most welcome in getting us to where we are today as far as doing SCS conservation work."

Haile said he likes working with the SCS staff because they try to accommodate him. "When the district conservationist knows I'll be working in a certain area, he'll try to set up other appointments in the same general area so I don't have to jump around a lot and move my equipment long distances," he said.

Profile: Paul "Corky" Malm

THE CURRENT NATIONAL president of LICA lives in Lindsborg, Kans. He's been a contractor for 27 years and a member of LICA for 25 of those years. He joined LICA after he saw the difference conservation practices made to the land.

"When I began contracting, I had one piece of equipment and I was in it for the money, for survival," said Paul "Corky" Malm. "However, now, after all these years of working and of moving up in an organization that's committed to land improvement, I'm a dedicated soil and water conservation man." His firm, Malm Construction, is presently a major earthmoving company in Kansas.

Malm's talents are much broader than managing a business, as demonstrated by his climb to the national presidency of LICA. He's a popular speaker who makes several trips a year to other States to establish LICA chapters. Although he brings prepared talks to these meetings, he usually abandons them, walks out from behind the podium, and just starts saying what's on his mind. He believes people in the audience feel his sincerity, and they listen.

"The blood and guts of LICA membership are the small firms, those with one to five employees," he said. "We stand for the smaller contractor, but we help represent the well-being of the soil and water."

Malm has his own personal goals for LICA. "LICA is an action organization," he said. "We're driven by a creed, by objectives and goals. My own personal goal for this organization is to increase the momentum of land improvement into the 1990's."



Paul "Corky" Malm, national president of the Land Improvement Contractors of America (LICA), stands on the steps of a recreational park he is completing in Lindsborg, Kans. (Photo by Tim Christian.)

The farm economy has been slow for most of the 1980's. We seem to be on quite a turnaround now. There's increased demand for land improvement and environmental work. We'll be ready for it in at least 45 States — perhaps by 1995, in all 50 States."

If your plan calls for a crop rotation, the earlier you get started on the rotation the easier it will be to work out problems . . .

Good Reasons To Get a Conservation Plan Now

Editor's Note: Dale Allen, public affairs specialist, SCS, Temple, Texas, has prepared a list of good reasons why farmers should get their conservation plans on highly erodible land early.

IF YOU PLAN to farm highly erodible land (HEL) after December 31, 1989, and retain your eligibility for USDA program benefits, there are at least eight good reasons why you should get your conservation plan prepared and approved soon.

The Food Security Act of 1985 requires conservation plans on HEL by December 31, 1989. You need to start actively applying the plan with the 1990 crop. You then have until January 1, 1995, to complete the plan.

But if you wait until January 1, 1990, or later to get your plan approved, you could find yourself having to apply the planned treatment to the land before producing the next agricultural commodity on HEL with farm program benefits.

Since a conservation plan on an operating unit that has extensive HEL can require 3 to 5 years to complete, you could lose benefits for that length of time if you wait until 1990 to prepare your plan.

Here are eight good reasons for getting your plan early:

- 1. USDA cost-share assistance is limited. There is already a 2-year backlog for some funds. The sooner you get your plan and apply for cost share assistance, the better.
- 2. If your plan calls for a crop rotation, the earlier you get started on the rotation the easier it will be to work out problems encountered before January 1, 1995.
- 3. If you lease or rent your land to others or from others, both the tenant and landlord need to know well in advance the conservation alternatives for staying eligible for farm program benefits. If the needed treatments are expensive and the landlord is not willing to pay part or most of the cost, some renters will not farm the land after 1989.
- 4. If the practices needed are expensive, you might prefer to try to bid the land into the Conservation Reserve Program; but some counties have already reached the 25 percent maximum cropland allowed into the program. The longer you wait, the more likely your county will exceed the maximum.
- 5. If you have a water erosion problem, obtaining an accurate analysis of your conservation alternatives might require extensive engineering surveys and design. Some of the expertise needed to perform this service is not available at the county level and will have to be scheduled from the SCS area office, which could be several miles away.
- 6. If the plan you choose includes a crop rotation with a high residue-producing crop for which you have no base acreage, you will need the approval of the local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office to let you exchange one base crop for another. The request for exchange approval could take several weeks. Farmers who wait lose again.
- 7. In many counties, SCS does not have enough personnel to handle a large number of farmers wanting a plan during the last few months of the year. Those who wait past mid-summer will probably find a long waiting line well into 1990.
- 8. Farmers who already have a plan will have more flexibility in starting or changing it. They even have time to try two or more treatment alternatives before finalizing their plan, provided an approved conservation system is fully applied by January 1, 1995.

Scheduling such assistance is already causing a backlog in some counties. The longer you delay getting on the schedule, the longer you will have to wait for engineering assistance. Some farmers who wait until late 1989 will find it impossible to get such help scheduled this year.

... one way the idled workers could keep their jobs during the changeover was to perform 40 hours a week of community service.

From Factory To Field

YOU'VE KNOWN workers who left the field for the factory. Here are some who left the factory for the field — as Earth Team volunteers for the Soil Conservation Service.

During the last 7 months of 1988, seven workers at Ford Motor Company's Tractor and Equipment Plants in Romeo, Mich., provided 1,800 hours of volunteer assistance to SCS field offices at Richmond and Port Huron, Mich. Instead of performing their regular factory jobs, the workers helped SCS employees run surveys, identify highly erodible land, and complete other work related to implementing the conservation provisions of the Food Security Act (FSA) of 1985.

The workers volunteered to help SCS after Ford temporarily shut its Romeo tractor factory to convert it to one that manufactures engines. Under the terms of a contract between Ford and the United Auto Workers, one way the idled workers could keep their jobs during the changeover was to perform 40 hours a week of community service.

Two welders, William Carrothers and Jerome Walters, first contacted Chuck Lightfoot, SCS district conservationist at the Port Huron field office, about the possibility of performing community service by joining the Earth Team. After hearing



Ford workers on the Earth Team included Tom Bishop, left, and Bill Martindale, right, surveying the site of an erosion control structure near Richmond, Mich.
(Photo by Roger Howell.)

about the situation from Lightfoot and others, SCS Area Conservationist Percy Magee contacted officials at Ford to work out the details and to encourage more of the employees to volunteer.

"It was a great opportunity for district conservationists to get badly needed assistance," said Magee. "We provided information about the Earth Team for employee bulletin boards at Ford and let all the district conservationists in the area know about the opportunity. Workers from the tractor plant at Romeo have now provided nearly half of our Earth Team assistance and have helped us exceed our FSA goals."

Ford officials also seem pleased with the program. "It hasn't made any difference whether the people were doing conservation work for the Soil Conservation Service or landscaping for a local church," said Charles Duff, former internal relations representative at Ford's Romeo facility. "They have proved that they are an important part of their communities and are developing a positive reputation for factory workers."

John Johnson, district conservationist, SCS, Richmond, Mich.

New PMC For Wetlands

THE SOIL CONSERVATION Service recently opened a new plant materials center (PMC) at Golden Meadow, La., to evaluate and select superior varieties of plants to control soil erosion in coastal wetlands.

The Golden Meadow PMC is south of New Orleans in Lafourche Parish on 54 acres of land made available by The Louisiana Land and Exploration Company. With assistance from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 15 ponds have already been constructed on the site for evaluating wetland plants. Plant collections and accessions for the PMC were obtained from every coastal county from North Carolina to Texas.

Establishing vegetation is one of the most promising ways to slow erosion in many coastal wetlands. Smooth cordgrass, giant cutgrass, and gulf cordgrass are the primary plants currently being evaluated for this purpose at Golden Meadow.

Technicians dig up smooth cordgrass at the Golden Meadow, La., Plant Materials Center for testing in a marsh area.

Smooth cordgrass is extremely salt tolerant and is felt to have tremendous potential for stabilizing lake banks and shorelines. Giant cutgrass is useful in fresh water areas. Gulf cordgrass has high tolerance to soil salts and shows promise for use on barrier islands.

Among other important functions, coastal wetlands are vital to the marine fisheries industry and are a major wintering area for migratory waterfowl. It's estimated that Louisiana alone is currently losing 40 to 50 square miles of coastal wetlands to erosion each year.

When it was dedicated on April 22, Golden Meadow became the Nation's 26th PMC. Its development — over the past several years — has also involved the Lafourche-Terrebonne Soil and Water Conservation District, Louisiana State University (LSU), the LSU Agricultural Center, and the LSU Rice Research Station at Crowley, La.

Herb Bourque, public affairs specialist, SCS, Alexandria, La.



CRP Future Discussed

MEETING THIS PAST March in Columbus, Ohio, more than 60 researchers and conservation professionals discussed ways to improve the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) at a symposium on "The Social, Economic and Environmental Consequences of the Conservation Components of the Food Security Act (FSA) of 1985."

To reduce soil erosion and surplus crop production, the CRP, which is administered by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides annual rental payments to landowners who plant highly erodible and environmentally sensitive cropland to grass or trees and agree to maintain the cover for 10 years. USDA's Soil

Conservation Service provides technical assistance to the landowners.

To date, more than 28 million acres has been accepted into the program, resulting in a reduction of annual soil erosion by more than 500 million tons. Surplus production of some agricultural commodities has also been reduced. By and large, those in attendance at the Columbus symposium considered the CRP, which was established by the FSA, successful but suggested several ways to improve the program and to encourage farmers to maintain the permanent cover after contracts expire.

Most suggestions dealt with one of four major areas:

- promoting wildlife benefits through alternative enterprises such as game ranching;
- promoting tree planting;
- providing longer rental periods; and

- raising the bid cap on acreage rents.

Other suggestions dealt with encouraging the production of alternative crops through the use of limited input, sustainable agricultural systems.

Sponsors of the symposium included two regionally funded (multistate) research projects (NCR-149: Changing Institutional Environment for the On-Farm Adoption of Soil and Water Conservation Practices and NCR-111: Natural Resource Use and Environmental Policy), the Farm Foundation, Ohio State University, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and USDA's Soil Conservation Service and Economic Research Service.

James A. Maetzold, program analyst, SCS, and **Frank B. Clearfield**, sociologist, SCS, Washington, D.C.

SCS Offers On-Line Information

THE SOIL CONSERVATION Service has joined 12 other USDA agencies in distributing current information through the Electronic Dissemination of Information (EDI) service. EDI is a computerized, on-line system used by more than 36 news and information services, private commercial firms, and government agencies.

Categories of SCS information that will be available are: congressional testimony, popular publications, regional news releases, Soil and Water Conservation News magazine, short duration natural phenomenon reports, speeches, western water supply forecasts, and wind erosion reports.

With the system, subscribers anywhere in the world can access information by personal computers

and word processors equipped with modems. They are then able to repackage the information for their own use.

The EDI service carries about 50 categories of reports monthly, including statistical and analytical information on crops and livestock, daily market news information, shipping and other transportation data, and research into human and animal nutrition.

Conservation Plans Proceed

CONSERVATION PLANS have been developed for nearly four-fifths of the Nation's highly erodible cropland, as of the end of April 1989.

Conservation plans have been approved for 105.4 million acres, or 78 percent of the highly erodible cropland that will need compliance plans by the end of the year. SCS officials expect to meet the 1985 Farm Bill goal to have plans in place for

all highly erodible acreage by the end of this year.

Producers who cultivate highly erodible cropland must have an approved conservation plan by Dec. 31 to stay eligible for USDA programs. Those plans must be implemented by Dec. 31, 1994.

To date, conservation systems have been installed on 29 million acres, 22 percent of the highly erodible acres.

About 1.4 million conservation plans are expected to be developed by the end of this year, up from the 800,000 plans that were previously

estimated to be needed. Many farmers are having plans developed on a tract basis, rather than for the whole farm unit, thereby adding to what was previously estimated.

On farmland that is rented out, it is easier for the landowner and the producer to have conservation plans developed on smaller tracts than on the whole farm. This simplifies the transfer of tracts between producers.

Local SCS offices are contacting farmers by phone and letter to remind them about the deadline for conservation plans.

Team To Study Low-Cost Installations

A TEAM OF Soil Conservation State conservation engineers (SCE) has been formed to study and evaluate engineering practices that have potentially low initial installation cost. They will consider design procedures, drawings, job sheets, and other materials and information on these low-cost conservation practices.

One of the overriding concerns of implementing the provisions of the Food Security Act (FSA) has been the difficulty of some landowners in financing the high initial cost of commonly used structures, even with available cost-share programs. The low cost practices would be easily constructed with farm equipment and utilize local materials, but would require more intensive annual operation and maintenance requirements.

The objective of the team is to distribute information on these structures for soil and water conservation practices throughout the

United States. The team has completed the first phase of the assignment by collecting and evaluating materials on these structures. A copy of these materials is being sent to each SCE and head of the engineering staff at the National Technical Centers for evaluation in their respective States.

Team members include SCE's Henry A. Miller, Auburn, Ala.; Max L. Evans, Indianapolis, Ind.; Ralph M. Arrington, Phoenix, Ariz.; H. Leroy Zollinger, Boise, Idaho; Joseph R. Davis, Lexington, Ky.; Billy P. Hartsell, assistant SCE, Jackson, Miss.; and L. S. Button, Jr., retired, Richmond, Va.

NEW from SCS

New Look for SCS Materials

Several SCS printed pieces now have a coordinated visual theme and color scheme.

A new conservation plan cover and a generic kit folder were printed recently and have been distributed to State offices. The kit folder carries the stylized raindrop in blue and green on white background that is already familiar as

the cover design for *Assistance Available from the Soil Conservation Service*. The conservation plan cover has blue and green stripes and has space for identifying information to be added.

For copies, contact the public affairs specialist at the State SCS office.

Water Quality Exhibit

An SCS water quality exhibit, "Conserving and Protecting America's Water — One Drop at a Time," premiered at a National Nonpoint Water Quality Conference in April. The 8- by 10-foot exhibit is a portable, freestanding "Nomadic" display, and is on loan to SCS State offices for national, regional, or statewide events. It shows a photograph of clear water cascading over rocks in a stream as a background image as well as photos illustrating SCS conservationists and farmers working together.

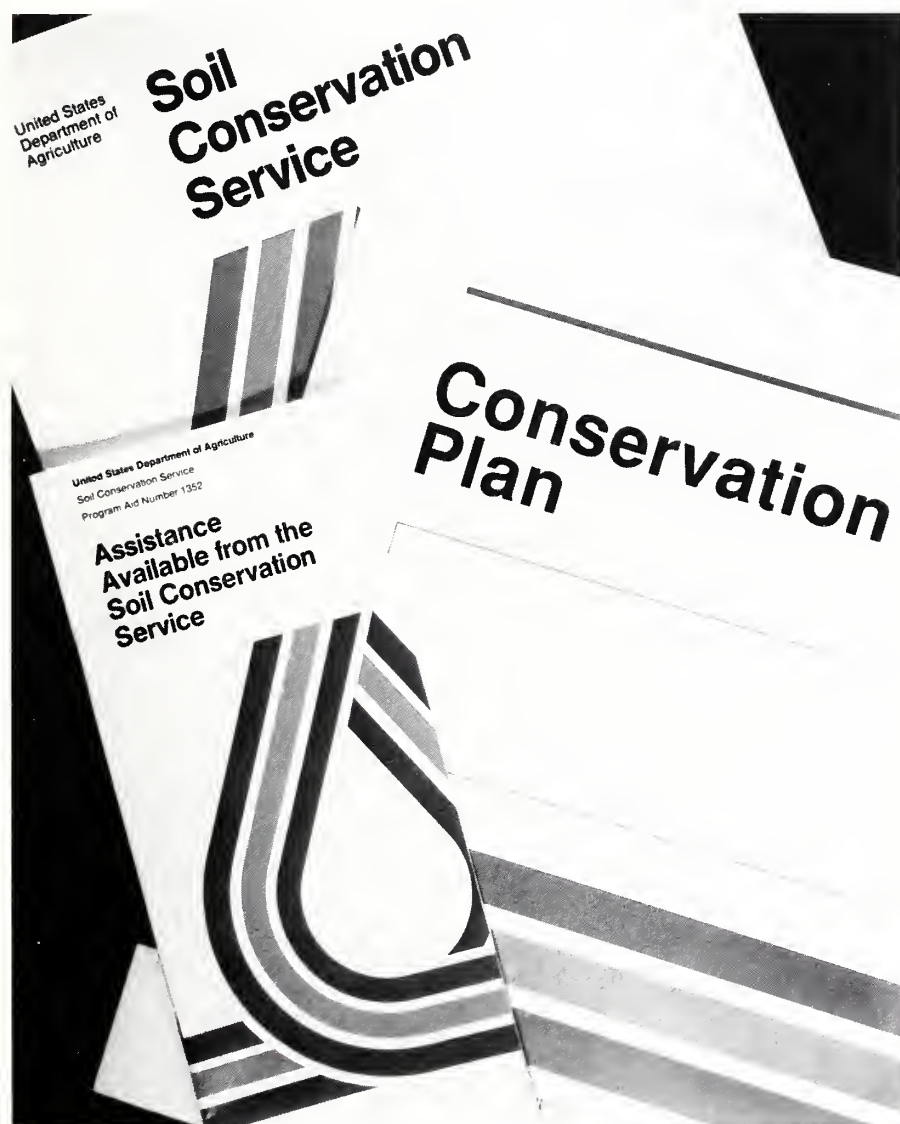
The theme of the exhibit emphasizes how America's water resources are being improved through the cooperation of farmers and SCS conservationists.

Contact the local SCS or conservation district office for more information regarding this exhibit.

Soil Erosion by Wind

SCS has recently issued *Soil Erosion by Wind*, the third publication in a new design series, which discusses the scope of erosion by wind, viable solutions for controlling it, and the ramifications of this problem for landowners and land users in the United States. This booklet is intended not only for farmers and ranchers, but also for the general public.

For a copy of this publication, ask the local SCS office for Agricultural Information Bulletin Number 555.



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Conservation Calendar

July	10-12	National Conference on Environmental Engineering (ASCE), Austin, Tex.
	10-14	International Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium, Vancouver, BC, Canada
	11-14	Coastal Zone 89, the Sixth Symposium on Coastal and Ocean Management (NOAA), Charleston, S.C.
	12-13	Southern Conservation Tillage Conference (University of Florida), Tallahassee, Fla.
	14-18	Society for Range Management Summer Meeting, Kamloops, BC, Canada
	16-19	North Central Region of the National Association of Conservation Districts, Indianapolis, Ind.
	17-21	National Water Conference Symposium (ASCE), Newark, Del.
	19-21	Izaak Walton League National Convention, Harrisburg, Pa.
	19-22	Annual Summer Board Meeting of the Land Improvement Contractors of America, St. Louis, Mo.
	26-29	44th Annual Meeting of the American Horticultural Society, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.
	30-Aug.1	South Central Region of the National Association of Conservation Districts, S. Padre Island, Tex.
	30-Aug.2	Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Meeting, Edmonton, AL, Canada
August	30-Aug.2	American Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting, Baton Rouge, La.
	13-16	Association of State and Interstate Pollution Control Administrators Annual Meeting, Nashville, Tenn.
	21-23	Nebraska Cattlemen's 2nd Annual Convention, Kearney, Neb.
	27-31	Reclamation, A Global Perspective (American Society for Surface Mining and Reclamation, Co-Sponsor), Calgary, Al, Canada
September	4-8	The 119th Annual Meeting of American Fisheries Society, Anchorage, Alaska
	17-22	American Water Resources Association Conference & Symposium, Tampa, Fla.
	20-22	National Waterways Conference, Inc., Annual Meeting, St. Louis, Mo.
	24-27	National Convention of the Society of American Foresters, Spokane, Wash.